

7/02/02

To: CINMS Advisory Council

From: Linda Krop, Conservation Representative

Re: Conservation Working Group Report, 7/02/02

The Conservation Working Group (CWG) met on July 2, 2002. Members present: Linda Krop, Chair; Greg Helms, Co-Chair; Jean Holmes; Drew Bohan; Mary Stack; Rick Skillin

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission and purpose of the CWG was described for new public attendees. The CWG members introduced themselves.

2. MARINE RESERVES UPDATE

Linda Krop and Greg Helms provided background and an update regarding the marine reserves decision-making process. Linda and Greg reminded the CWG and audience that neither the CWG nor the Sanctuary Advisory Council will submit any additional formal recommendations to the decision-making bodies. However, due to the CWG role in the process to date, updates will be given to inform the group and the public.

Greg reported that the draft environmental document pertaining to reserves in state waters (up to 3 miles around the Channel Islands) is available for public review and comment. Comments are due July 15. The public can purchase copies from Kinko's. Greg also reported that the Fish and Game Commission hearing was continued from August to December; however, the issue (and timing of the decision) may be addressed at the Commission's August 1-2 meeting in San Luis Obispo. Some public groups have requested a decision hearing earlier than December.

After the state decision, the CINMS will consider marine reserves in the federal portion of the Sanctuary (4-6 miles around the Channel Islands). Other agencies (including the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, National Marine Fisheries Service, and California Coastal Commission) will also provide input regarding the proposed marine reserves.

Greg reported that in a separate action, the PFMC declared an emergency groundfish closure offshore California, Oregon and Washington, between 120-900 feet (depth). This closure was declared because several groundfish species are close to being listed as threatened or endangered. Greg provided a map showing a comparison between the groundfish closure and the proposed CINMS marine reserves.

3. ddddMANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Linda provided an update regarding the status of the CINMS Management Plan Update process. The federal government continues to conduct internal review of the draft plan and environmental impact statement (EIS). The draft plan and EIS are expected to be released to the public in late fall or early winter. In an unusual turn of events, the government will not identify a “preferred alternative” in the EIS. Instead, the document will provide an analysis of various alternatives for public review and comment.

Daniel Basta, the director of the National Marine Sanctuary Program, will attend the July 12 SAC meeting to discuss the status of the Management Plan Update process, and to explain why the government has decided not to designate a “preferred alternative.”

Linda described the elements of the Management Plan – boundary definition, regulations, and non-regulatory programs. She referred to previous CWG recommendations regarding these issues.

A public comment was received, requesting that commercial space launches be exempt from CINMS regulations.

4. ddddWATER QUALITY PROTECTION

Linda reported that both the SAC and the CWG have identified water quality as a high priority for the CINMS. She gave a power-point presentation about the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Water Quality Protection Program.

A discussion ensued, identifying lessons learned from the MBNMS program, and discussing recommendations for application to the CINMS. Comments and questions were raised concerning:

- a. The extent and need for additional monitoring data, to identify the status of water quality in the CINMS, what’s causing the problems, who’s addressing the problems and what’s being done, and what additional work needs to be done. Baseline monitoring information was identified as a high priority and important starting point.
- b. Stormwater and agricultural runoff were identified as important contributors to ocean pollution.
- c. Potential roles for the CINMS to bring to the issue of water quality include: education; coordination; staffing; funding; and assistance in developing monitoring and cleanup plans.
- d. The CINMS should look at biological, as well as human health, issues.
- e. Reports indicate that the problems are worse than we thought, and that our base of knowledge is less than we thought.
- f. The CINMS could help provide more public surveillance and regulation.
- g. The CINMS could help protect our ecology and our economy through improved water quality protection.

- h. The CINMS could coordinate with the fishing industry to develop monitoring data.
- i. A coordinated, consistent monitoring program is essential. We are lacking in adequate information
- j. Oil and gas discharges should be addressed. The CINMS could help analyze alternatives that would minimize water quality impacts.
- k. The chemical dump offshore Pt. Arguello should be studied.
- l. The Pac Baroness site and impacts from the shipwreck should be analyzed.
- m. The relationship between the CINMS boundary, and the ability to effectively address water pollution, must be acknowledged in the Management Plan. An expanded boundary will help address water quality issues.

5. dddd**NEXT MEETINGS**

- a. The next SAC meeting is July 12 in Ventura. Daniel Basta and the SAC will discuss the Management Plan process from 9:30 – 11:00. Public comment will occur from 11:00 – 11:15. See the CINMS web site for the full agenda.
- b. The next CWG meeting will take place prior to the September SAC meeting. Notice will be provided via the CINMS web site and e-mail list.